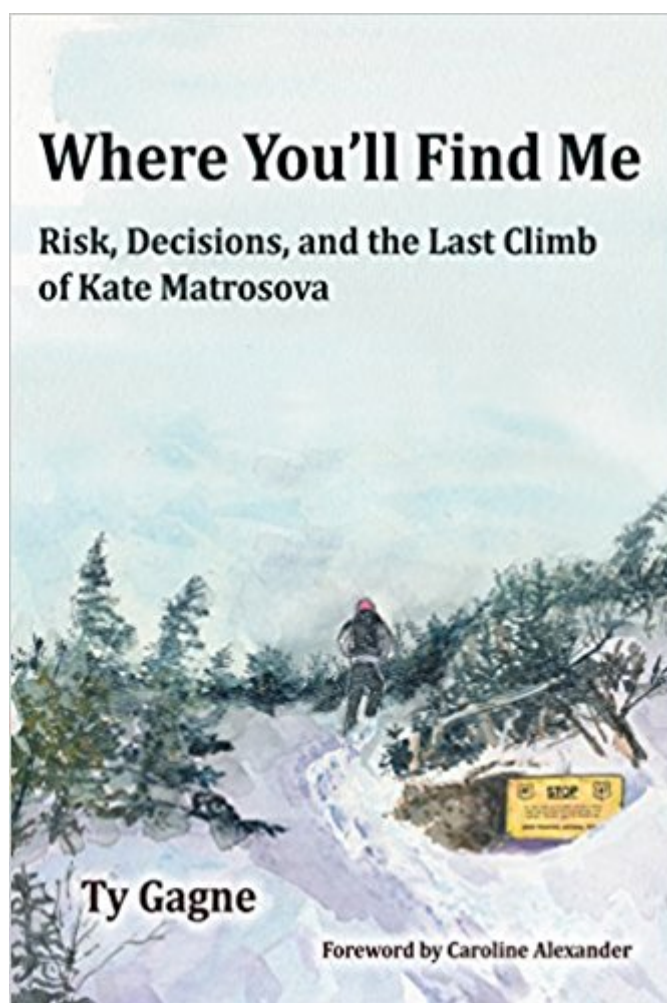


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Where You'll Find Me: Risk, Decisions, And The Last Climb Of Kate Matrosova



Synopsis

On Feb. 15, 2015, Kate Matrosova, an avid mountaineer, set off before sunrise for a traverse of the Northern Presidential Range in New Hampshire's White Mountains. Late the following day, rescuers carried her frozen body out of the mountains amid some of the worst weather ever recorded on these deceptively rugged slopes. At thirty-two, Matrosova was ultra-fit and healthy and had already summited much larger mountains on several continents. Her gear included a rescue beacon and a satellite phone. Yet, despite their best efforts, more than forty expert search and rescue personnel, a New Hampshire Army National Guard Blackhawk helicopter, and a Civil Air Patrol Cessna airplane could not reach her in time to save her. What went wrong? Where You'll Find Me offers possible answers to that question, demonstrating why Matrosova's story—what we know and what we will never know—represents such an intriguing and informative case study in risk analysis and decision-making.

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Customer Reviews

"Ty Gagne's account of this tragedy is one of the best 360 degree analyses I've ever seen. Objective facts of the case aside—clothing, equipment, etc., the human factors for all involved provide us with important perspectives. His research on the elements of risk and how we make decisions should serve readers well when they venture forth in any wilderness setting."—John E. (Jed) Williamson, President Emeritus, Sterling College, Editor, *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*, 74th Edition, 2014, Current board member: Central Asia Institute, Former President American Alpine Club, "In this

gripping tale told with both grim detail and deep sensitivity. Gagne takes us into risky terrain, where the smallest decision made by one individual can lead to life-changing events for many. His own compassion invites us to identify with the woman whose final struggle to survive ultimately leaves us with the sense that she was a friend we never had. Throughout the book, Gagne reminds us that in order to assess our own risks, we must visit places in ourselves we may not know as well as we should. The story also emerges as a testament to the brave men and women of volunteer search and rescue teams, whose willingness to risk themselves for others must also be tempered by good decision making. *Where You'll Find Me* is many things: an adventure story, survival narrative, love story, and it contains an implicit promise that the spirit of Kate Matrosova will live forever among the footpaths of the Presidential Range.

—Peter Kick, Author of *Desperate Steps: Life, Death, and Choices Made in the Mountains of the Northeast*

“Destined to be a classic in the canon of mountaineering literature.”

—Peter Kick, Author of *Desperate Steps: Life, Death, and Choices Made in the Mountains of the Northeast*

“You don’t have to be a mountaineer to appreciate the human drama of this tightly researched, vividly told story. Gagne gives voice to an impressive number of eye witnesses and knowledgeable experts, all of whom lend perspective and authority to his own keen analysis of the tragedy. But the big reason this book will enjoy wide appeal is the author’s ability to draw important lessons from the mistakes that led to an untimely death while managing to celebrate with respect and compassion the life force that was Kate Matrosova.”

—Stefany Shaheen, COO of Good Measures and author of *Elle & Coach, Diabetes, the Fight for My Daughter’s Life, and the Dog Who Changed Everything*

“Gagne adeptly integrates a tale of high adventure gone awry with the intriguing science behind the risks and decisions we as humans face. Within this finely-crafted account, the various threads comprising this story are seamlessly interwoven against the rugged backdrop of New Hampshire’s Presidential Range. Matrosova’s fateful solo journey hauntingly unfolds alongside an analysis of the dire climatic and geographic elements conspiring against her. The daring rescue efforts undertaken to save her are so viscerally penned as to transport readers right to the wind-tortured peaks being contended with. *Where You’ll Find Me* serves as an example of just where decisional missteps can lead us—and a sobering reminder of Mother Nature’s deadly potential.”

—Edward Swanson, Award-winning author of *Mesmer*, *Disciple* and *Madoc*, *Legac*

I first wanted to read the book as my son was the Blackhawk pilot hoping for a rescue. But quickly reading the book I was spellbound by how the author presented facts of her climb and the expertise of so many talented and dedicated people from the White Mountain region. My son and I have climbed the route Kate took in good weather and it is challenging even then. The insight to the physical and mental adversities is mind boggling. I have had the pleasure of seeing the author's presentation first hand and was captivated by his commitment to detail.....all the details that all involved had to face and the decisions they had to make. I am so thankful that all of the rescuers made it back safely. At the end of the book my thoughts were only for Kate and her husband Charlie.

Gagne meticulously details a page-turning case study of Matrosova's climb into the White Mountains. The account was objective, but filled with humanity: from the details of what Mastrosova packed, to the color of her eyes, to the beautiful New Hampshire inspired watercolors throughout. His words plead for a lesson in humility: to mountains; to egos. This book will have a ripple effect of making the mountaineering community even more diligent through reminders of the weight of our decisions and life itself; thorough risk assessments, and by emphasizing and honoring examples of the tempered, careful, and tireless rescuers. This book is not just for the outdoorsmen! It's respectful, entertaining and educational. The chapter's endings are cliff hangers, and left me with goosebumps more than a dozen times.

This book is about a well publicized death here in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. While there are many books out there that review tragedies in the mountains, many of them focus more on the what (e.g. weather, route, clothing, gear, etc.) and less on the why (e.g. go or no go, alter plan, turn back, etc.). My 28 years as a risk manager has taught me that the why is as, or in most instances more, important than the what. The author looks at the mental, physical, and environmental factors that contributed to this event. There was bad weather and many have said that they wouldn't (and didn't) venture outside based on the forecast. It wasn't the decision to start her trip that killed her. That's the easy answer. There were multiple instances along the way that had she made a different decision she would have survived that day. The book addresses those decisions. I saw the author present the underlying information at a conference earlier this year and was excited to read an expanded version of that presentation, which was great. The book was even better. It arrived yesterday afternoon and I started reading it as soon as I unwrapped and I didn't stop until I was done - read it cover to cover without ever leaving my seat. I knew the story and it still gripped me. I'm an instructor at an outdoor leadership school and I run my own hiking group (5,000+

members). Keeping people safe while enjoying the outdoors is important to me and I plan to read this one again. There were several situations where I was reflecting back on decisions that I've made that were being described in the book. I plan to use these lessons with the people I teach and lead. It's a great resource to help prepare your mind as well as you prepare your legs and lungs. If you venture outdoors, with a group or alone, I highly recommend you read this book.

WOW! A gripping, well-written page-turner. It takes you to a beautiful and dangerous place, the White Mountains of NH, propelling you through a heart-wrenching, pulse-pounding account of a powerful climber's fateful encounter with nature at its worst, leaving you to seriously question your own fallibility. While not a mountain climber, this reader was nonetheless drawn in to the tight clutch of this haunting yet educational story. The author wastes none of your time, skillfully exploring and balancing science, risk management and humanity. You can tell he truly cares about the climber, rescuers, mountains and unique culture enveloping them -- an authenticity that can't be simulated. Kate was an amazing and powerful woman; a super achiever who seemed willing and able to overcome any challenge. Experiencing Kate's strength, and to see it yield to nature during her last climb, leaves you with an important, timeless and terrifying lesson that even the best and most cautious of us are so often tempted to suppress because of our strength, abilities, ambitions and intrinsic need to discover ourselves. This reader, who spends free time in the ocean, is left with an uncomfortable but critical question: is there a level of risk we are all willing to take to reach our goals, even when facing the merciless elements of nature; and will we, as inherently imperfect beings, always manage it well enough to avoid tragedy? A book I'll never forget.

After being in the audience of the presentation, *Trouble in the Presidentials*, I was thrilled to see this book published. The author creates a narrative that leaves the reader feeling as if they had known Kate Matrosova for years. Kate's story is so much more than what might seem like the obvious. This story vividly demonstrates risk, decision-making and impact. You will capture the clearest image of what Kate's detailed plan was, what she could have done differently, and what went wrong during her trek through the Presidentials. It is undeniable that the writer conducted a great deal of research in order to nail every detail. It's the type of book that you do not want to put down. It is suspenseful, educational, and transforming. This story will put your own decision-making process into perspective. For that reason, I highly recommend this book to all readers.

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